

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action dated October 20, 2003, claims 12 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 1-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirano.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of providing an interview to applicant's attorney on November 13, 2003. During the interview, the Examiner was shown a separation wheel, a wheel housing with sorting apertures and a cover or hopper, as illustrated in Figure 1C of the drawings of the instant application. Also, claims 2, 12 and 21 were discussed, as was the Hirano reference. It was agreed that claims 2, 12 and 21 would be amended.

More particularly, as to the § 112, first paragraph rejection of claims 12 and 21, these claims are hereby amended to recite that each of the plurality of apertures in the separating wheel has a diameter large enough to accommodate a diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted, and wherein a diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted is smaller than twice the diameter of the smallest coin meant to be sorted so that two of the smallest diameter ones of the coins meant to be sorted cannot fit into one aperture. It was agreed that this amendment to claims 12 and 21 overcomes the § 112, first paragraph rejection.

As to the rejection of claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the meaning of this claim was explained. It is believed that the meaning is clear and that no amendment of this claim is necessary.

As to the rejection of claims 1-30 over the Hirano reference, it was noted that Hirano does not disclose a wheel housing with a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes. Rather, no sorting takes place in Hirano, as noted in applicant's

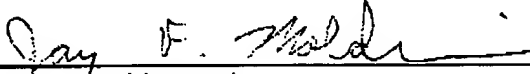
amendment which was filed on August 1, 2003.

However, applicant has amended claim 2 to recite a second toroidal flange, having a set of gear teeth. This is to distinguish the toroidal flange recited in claim 2 from the toroidal flange recited in claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, prompt and favorable examination of pending claims 1-30 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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